

WMA STATEMENT ON FAMILY PLANNING AND THE RIGHT OF A WOMAN TO CONTRACEPTION

Adopted by the 48th WMA General Assembly, Somerset West, South Africa, October 1996,

revised by the 58th WMA General Assembly, Copenhagen, Denmark, October 2007

And reaffirmed with minor revision by the 207th WMA Council session, Chicago, United States, October 2017

PREAMBLE

The WMA recognizes that unwanted pregnancies and pregnancies that are too closely spaced can have a serious adverse effect on the health of a woman and of her children. These adverse effects can include the premature deaths of women. Existing children in the family can also suffer starvation, neglect or abandonment resulting in their death or impaired health, when families are unable to provide for all their children. Social functioning and the ability to reach their full potential can also be impaired.

The WMA recalls its [Declaration of Ottawa on Child Health](#), and supports the universal health rights of all children worldwide.

The WMA recognizes the benefits for women who are able to control their fertility. They should be helped to make such choices themselves, as well as in discussion with their partners. The ability to do so by choice and not chance is a principal component of women's physical and mental health and social well-being.

Access to adequate fertility control methods is not universal; many of the poorest women in the world have the least access. Knowledge about how their bodies work, information on how to control their fertility and the materials necessary to make those choices are universal and basic human rights for all women.

The [Sustainable Development Goals 5, target 6](#) calls for the "universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights...".

RECOMMENDATIONS

The WMA recommends that National Medical Associations:

- Promote family planning education by working with governments, NGOs and others to provide secure and high-quality services and assistance;
- Demand from governments to ensure that such information, materials, products and services are available without regard to nationality, creed, race, religion or socioeconomic status.